

MiteFax San Joaquin Valley Cotton

Crop Conditions:

Warm weather continues to bypass the valley. Chances for 80 degree temps are in the forecast, but so is more rain. These prolonged conditions make it difficult for Extension workers or PCAs to make long term recommendations.

A key question our contacts brought up Friday is how to manage thrips. Some thrip treatments are underway. PCAs say they are weighing potential leaf loss due to thrips against the value of thrips feeding on mites.

"We're treating thrips, even though it's against my better judgment to treat thrips," says Steve Lenander, a PCA and plant physiologist who works in Kern, Kings and Tulare Counties. "But I think everything we do this year will be against my better judgment. Conventional management is really out the window."

Leaf area remains minimal in many fields due to cool weather, even with plants that have several true leaves, notes Bob Hutmacher, Extension cotton specialist. Excessive thrip damage reduces photosynthetic potential even more, he says. Damaged root systems already hinder vigor.

"This is a hard call," says Hutmacher. "Nobody wants to do anything that might cause more prob-

lems down the line, like flaring mites. But for some plants, treating thrips may be a simple matter of survival this season."

Mite Report:

James Brazzle, Extension entomology advisor, Kern County: "Populations are slowly moving up. In fields I saw around Wasco and Greenfield, they're at 25-30%. Along 166, populations were low to nonexistent. Even where I saw mites, thrips were feeding, and some colonies had been cleaned up. There may be some people who've applied miticides, and others considering it right now. If the thrips can hold them off for a week or two and give plants time to grow, that gives better coverage."

Steve Wright, Extension farm advisor, Tulare County: "Thrips really hammered several fields I saw, and some banded treatments are going on to control them, mostly with Orthene, and they're adding a low rate of miticide in some cases, though it's hard to get up under the leaf on these small plants."

Vern Crawford, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Shafter: "People may think we're crazy, but we will start irrigating some fields next week, then come back with Zephyr and add Orthene for thrip and maybe lygus control. After

that, we come back with Temik. Here's our thinking: plants may be small, but they're pushing 5th node. With these determinates, squaring could start in two weeks. We've got a 3-week time frame to get all this done. If temperatures jump sharply, we could be playing catchup. Our goal is protecting that early fruit."

Steve Lenander, PCA, Technicare, Bakersfield: "Mites aren't bad, just spots here and there in our fields in Kern, Kings and Tulare Counties. We have some treatments scheduled next week where cotton is big enough. In some cases, we're treating thrips, too."

Miguel Romero, PCA, Britz Fertilizer, Tulare: "We're picking up mites in cotyledons south of Tulare and a little bit of mite in fields south and west of Tulare. Weather permitting, I might start applying a low rate of Zephyr next week."

Ron Avila, PCA, Western Farm Service, Five Points: "I'm not finding mite populations, but I am treating some edges for thrips off garlic."

Mike Molatore, PCA, Western Farm Service, Mettler: "I've got cotton that I may spray soon for mites, depending on how thrips move in from drying wheat. We had a medium

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Early Mite Control Pays Dividends

More and more research supports early miticide treatments to help prevent costly yield reductions. In fact, studies show that early mite infestations cause the greatest reductions in yield, fiber quality and seed viability.* An early application of Zephyr® miticide/insecticide will deliver a quick strike against current mite generations, then provide up to four full weeks of residual control. (*Data on file.) -- Sponsored message.

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Zephyr®
0.15 EC
miticide/insecticide

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infestation, but we're finding dead mites and an occasional live mite now. Without thrips, I would have sprayed this week. As it is, we may not spray until next week or the week after."

Randy Delerio, PCA and partner, High Desert Ag, Mendota: "A few fields have mites showing up, but not enough to justify treating yet. Where guys planted with Temik, they're not a problem. In non-Temik fields, we're getting thrip damage, and plants are starting to turn into match sticks. Where we have Temik, we have relatively big leaves, and plants are growing as normal as possible. Southwest of Fresno where we are in a dustier soil and the grower didn't use Temik, we will treat mites next week."

Dan Munk, Extension farm advisor, Fresno County: "Strong winds (30-40 mph gusts) during the week blew up the dust, and that should have scouts looking for mites this week. Some treatments already have been made."

Jim Hall, independent PCA, Fresno: "Last week I saw single mites, now I'm seeing colonies. We're looking at treating in the first couple of weeks before first irrigation, which will be mid-June at the earliest."

Sara Savary, PCA, Crop Care Associates, Fresno: "We are starting to spray mites in cotton north of Dos Palos. We're treating some fields with lower populations to minimize stress on the cotton when — or is that, *IF?* — temperatures warm. South of Dos Palos things look better. Mites are just starting to show in some fields, especially next to alfalfa. Thrips are active in most colonies."

Other Crops:

Some peach twig borer (PTB) sprays were being made on almonds. Mite populations in almonds continue to mainly be European red mites in the southern SJV, says James Brazzle, Extension entomologist in Kern

County. PCAs and Extension workers in other parts of the valley reported low populations and no webbing.

Sara Savary, PCA, Crop Care Associates in Fresno, reports that she is treating some vineyards that have a history of heavy mite populations as the mites start to increase there.

Mites are just starting to show up in almonds and fruit trees," she says. "We will probably be about 2 to 3 weeks later than normal on our mite programs in these crops."

Survey Results:

Thanks to those of you who completed our degree day survey form last week. We have used your planting date reports to help strike average starting points for the degree day table. At least in the early season, we are using two planting dates: April 20 and May 13.

We will compare 1998 accumulations to the 30-year average and the same period in 1995, the nearest year with a wet, cold start. About 80% of the respondents chose the 1995 set over a comparison to 1997, which was a relatively early season.

Other points in the survey:

There was a 30% average in severe root damage or tap root loss among those responding. Estimates ranged from as low as 2% to a couple of readers who said they were dealing with 80% damage or loss.

About 60% of the April plantings still were in the 1-2 true leaf stage (TLS), with about 35% in the 3-4 TLS.

Cotton seeded in May was all reported in cotyledon and 1-2 TLS.

In all, 30 people responded. That's not a scientific sampling, but the responses helped us clarify some of our thinking about conditions to date.

San Joaquin Valley Cotton Degree-day Report

Degree days above since:						
	4/20/98			5/13/98		
Location	1998	1995	30 year	1998	1995	30 year
Arvin	212	249	382	66	123	200
Shafter	243	291	382	41	138	200
Visalia	208	232	329	68	120	174
Stratford	208	261	402	71	127	192
Kettleman	223	273	402	77	133	192
FivePts	217	261	328	74	127	171
Tranquility	205	264	328	70	107	171
Firebaugh	193	214	328	58	134	171
Los Banos	179	192	306	57	97	156

Single sine calculation 60° F